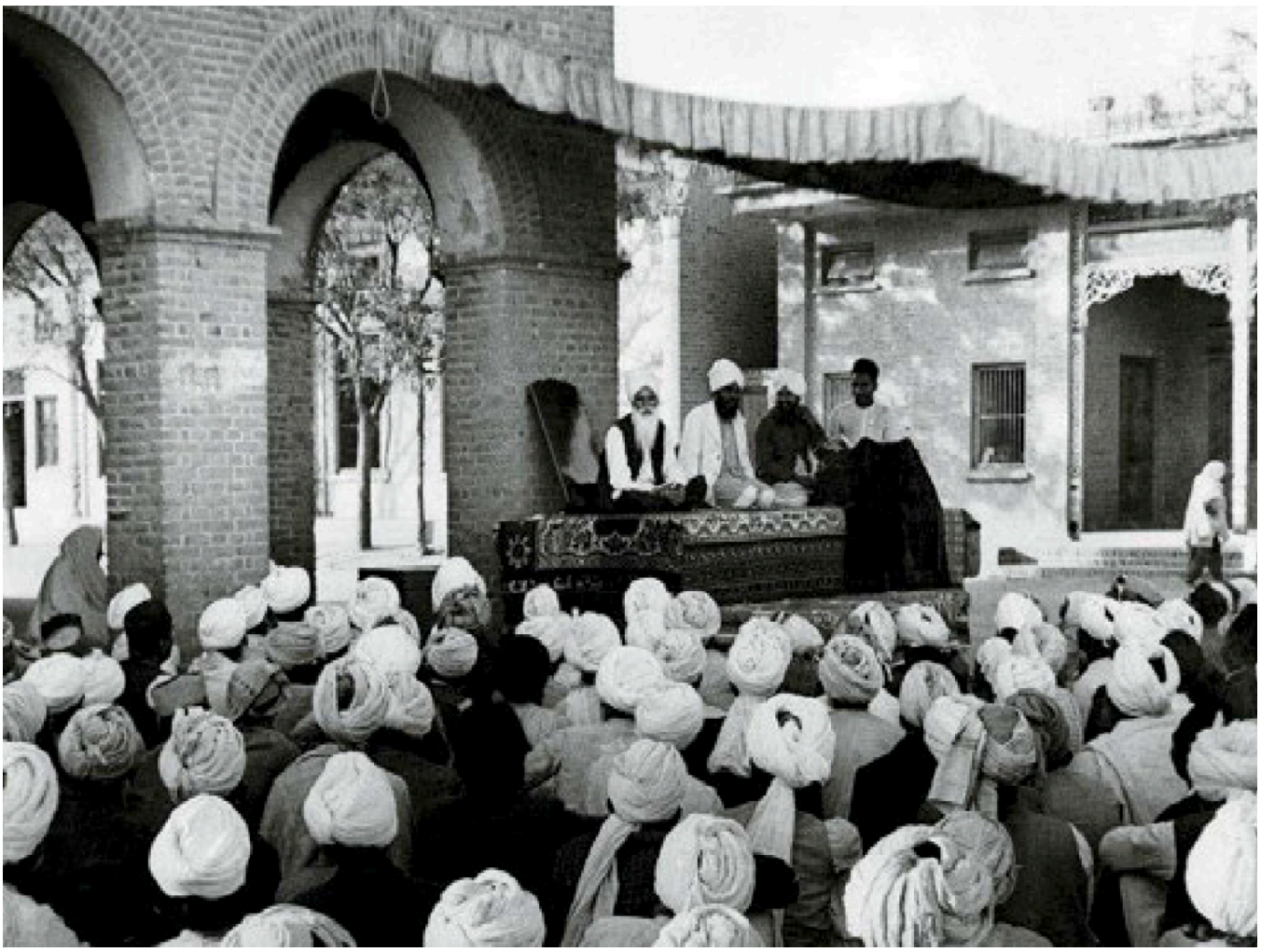

Life at the Dera Continues. Hazur begins to Prepare Baba Ji for the Satsang Work in South India. Baba Ji Studies the Lives of the Saints of the Sant Mat Lineage

Baba Ji's life in the Dera continued as before with the added joy that he now had a conscious inner link with the Master Power of which Hazur was the living embodiment. In the coming months, as

his soul progressed deeper and deeper within under His guidance, he came to appreciate how his life, however challenging it might have been, was orchestrated down to the minutest detail to give him first hand experience of the many practices adopted to realize God. As Huzur graciously took his soul to that place within where he could behold the inner source of each, he realized the important role each plays in the life of the spiritual aspirant. He came to realize that all the various practices that he had engaged in like the performance of rites and ritual (karm kand), japa (repetition of sacred mantras), tapa (austerities)) pilgrimage (tirath yatra), vrat (fasts) asanas (yogic postures), gyan (spiritual wisdom), dhyan (contemplation), prayer (prarthana) all sprang from a noble place within on the higher planes and had pure and powerful significance when practiced under the guidance of a Preceptor whose attention had risen to the source of which they came. They, in fact, were all interrelated with one another but when outwardly practiced without the guidance of one whose attention had become totally integrated with the Source from which they all sprang, tended to lead one into separate by-ways that, at their best, might yield some benefit due to gaining some power of

concentration, but in most cases left one far from the goal of union with God which was the fountain head of all Paths. As he had practiced many of the above-mentioned sadhana's, he also knew that to gain mastery in any of them required years of dedicated effort. During that time, one needed to make commendable sacrifices. Even after so much effort one might only acquire some power of concentration, thus giving one a magnetic power far beyond the range of normal human experience. Yet for all that one would still remain within the confines of subtle mind and Maya. It was because of this experience that formed a significant part of his own quest that he always held in high regard any sincere seeker who might be engaged in any aspect of the quest for Truth. If they found themselves desiring to go beyond where the reach of what they were currently doing, Baba Ji was glad to explain, from his practical experience what the upper limits were of the practices they were doing. If they wished to go higher and of themselves sought his guidance, he was happy to assist them in their search.

As this awareness of the limitations of what he had practiced grew in his heart, the gratitude for the guidance of the Great Master also increased

day-by-day. Tears of joy often flowed down his cheeks as he sat in meditation during the night when he was free of other responsibilities.

Through the Satsang's of Huzur, Baba Ji was now exposed to an expanded range of bhakti poets of the Sant Mat tradition. The lyrical poetry of several of them was already known to him such as Kabir, Mira Bai and Namdeva but many were new such as Dadu Dayal, Guru Nanak and his 9 successors, Swami Ji Maharaj of Agra, Paltu Sahib, Sahjo Bai, Ravidas etc. Having the poetic temperament himself, he was enchanted with the manner in which They presented the Teachings of the Saints in the form of Their bani's. Each day when Huzur was at the Dera (for He often traveled to other parts of North India) he conducted Satsang. Just to see Him enter the Satsang Hall with the regal stately bearing of the most noble of Emperors drawing each person attending into His gentle loving aura as if they were His very own children, was a most sublime elevating experience in itself. But when He took His seat, and looked out upon those assembled, be they a few or in the thousands, was yet more elevating. From His eyes flowed a Divine Light that flooded the entire Sangat with His radiance, suspending the actions

of time and space, drawing the attention of each towards that still point between and slightly above the two eyes where all true vision of Life is experienced. Indeed from every pore of His body an attractive luminosity poured forth filling those who beheld It with joy and peace. Then the Pothi (the person chanting the bani or poetic couplets of the Saint whose teachings Huzur was commenting on that day) commenced singing the bani. A deep and profound silence fell upon the hearts of all as the words of the Saints penetrated the mind and began transforming it into a pure receptive vessel for holding the Truth. After the first couplet of the bani was sung, the Pothi would halt and then Huzur would explain its inner significance in chaste Punjabi language-each word charged with the Power of God's Light and Love as His soul was merged in that Infinite Sea of All Consciousness.

"His eyes were intoxicated with love of God and His hand was one with that of God. He was mouthpiece of God and God Himself spoke through that human throat."

from 'A brief life-sketch of Huzur Baba Sawan Singh Ji Maharaj' by Kirpal Singh

With each passing day Baba Ji's inner and outer life were enriched. The two supported each other in a seamless manner. Huzur's simple, graceful and sublime words concerning the path of discipleship touched Baba Ji's heart in a profound way and as he went about his daily duties of working in the fields, serving in the langar or any other activity the form of Huzur was before him and the words He uttered reverberated in his heart as living vibrant entities that were meant to be followed with thought and care so that the entire life reflected the Truth they conveyed. In this way his entire being became absorbed in the Path of the Masters with the result that the two seeming different bodies, that of the Master and that of the disciple, while maintaining their distinct outer appearances became one in the within for in that inner realm only the power of the Celestial Sound Current and Divine Light held sway and it was in that domain that all individual differences were eradicated. This transformation occurred quietly and unobtrusively virtually unknown to anyone else but the two of them.

Baba Ji's life long habit of studying sacred scriptures continued while living at the Dera. As Huzur opened up to him the rich tradition of the

bhakti poet/Saints of North India he spent time each day savoring one shloka at a time of the writing of Dadu Sahib, Bulleh Shah, Baba Farid, Swami Ji and others. He made it a principal of his life to be sure that what they were talking about, he was applying to his own life. He understood that unless he applied their sacred words to his life, there was no value in memorizing them parrot-like. Having spent his days in working, remembering the words of the Master and attending Satsang while discarding all other thoughts, the time spent in meditation whether it was little or much, produced a wonderful fruit in the form of his soul traveling ever more deeply into the Light in the company of Huzur's Radiant Form.

Baba Ji is Entrusted with More Seva Responsibilities as per Huzur's Wishes. Baba Ji Manages the Langar Food Storehouse. Interesting Incidents Regarding Seva

Huzur, on the outer level, began entrusting important seva's to him the end result being that he was assigned the responsibility of managing the food supplies required for the langar and

supervising the work of those assigned the job of cooking for the many people coming to eat in the community kitchen both on a daily basis and for those coming from outside for the large monthly Satsang/Initiation program or who arrived unexpectedly for one reason or another. This seva was considered one of the most important in the Dera because it was a basic principal of Baba Sawan Singh Ji that people coming to the ashram for any reason and at any time of day or night, should first be fed a simple but hearty meal of dal, chapatti and vegetables.

The Dera at that time was growing dramatically as word spread throughout India that a great Sage was living there. In India the Darshan of such a High and Holy one is considered one of the most auspicious events of the life whether a person was initiated or not. It meant for Baba Ji and all those working with him, that there were times when little or no sleep was to be had. It was not uncommon for individuals or even large groups to arrive in the middle of the night and according to Huzur's instructions must be fed. And when the monthly Satsang came as well as the several major celebrations of birth or death anniversaries of Masters of the Sant Mat lineage, particularly of

Baba Jaimal Singh Ji then food needed to be prepared for tens of thousands of people at a time.

Baba Ji was deeply grateful that he had been given the opportunity to serve all the dear ones coming to meet the Master and participate in the Satsang programs. He had come to know from direct inner experience that the Power of the Master was living in each and every heart and to serve His family of devotees, disciples and admirers was to serve Him. But, on the other hand, he was troubled because there were times when he could not sit in meditation the minimum of three hours between the hours of 3-6 am as enjoined by Huzur at the time of Initiation. Those hours, which were termed as the Amrit Vela or the Time of the Nectar, were deemed as the most auspicious period of the day for meditation because all the world was asleep, quiet prevailed, the aspirant was fresh and undisturbed by the activities of the day, and one was linked to an entire community of people, near and far, who were also awake at that time in the Remembrance of the Lord. And of greatest importance of all, the Grace of the Shabd Guru rained down in abundance for those who were awake and alert at that time.

One day toward evening Baba Ji went to put his problem to Huzur, of not finding regular time for meditation especially when large numbers of people came to the Dera to participate in the programs. After explaining his remorse for not being able to attend to what he considered the most important and sacred duty of a disciple, Huzur became quiet for sometime and withdrew into meditation. After a short while He opened those eyes filled with Divine Love and gently told Baba Ji, “The seva which you are doing in the remembrance of the Master is above meditation.” Hearing these precious words flow from the lips of the One who had become for him the support and foundation of his life, he gained the courage and confidence to give his whole heart to the duties that had been entrusted to him without any lingering worry or concern.

One day an incident occurred that would remain forever etched in his heart and mind as one of the many signs of His Masters greatness. It was about midnight when some 300 dear ones from a distant village arrived at the Dera. Huzur came out to greet them and after looking at each with Infinite Love, said, “Now everyone should go and partake

of the langar Prasad – the blessed food of the Saints."

"There is a lot of charging of the Master in parshad which They give us, a lot of grace is contained in that parshad of the Master. If we take that parshad with full love and faith in the Master, we can gain a lot, and a lot of our karma can be paid off by eating that parshad." –Sant Ajaib Singh

He then called Baba Ji and instructed him saying, "Distribute food to all those who have come." Baba Ji replied, "Maharaj Ji there are just a few chapattis remaining from the evening meal and the ladies who are responsible for preparing the food have all gone to sleep." Unperturbed Huzur replied, "It does not matter. Everything will be fine. Just go to the langar and spread a cloth over the basket in which the remaining chapattis have been kept. I myself am coming there." When He entered the langar He went over to the basket, and lifting the cloth and looking inside said, "Well you are saying that there are only a few chapatti's but, in reality the basket is full. There is sufficient food here to feed the entire Sangat." Following Huzur's request, while keeping the cloth upon the basket, Baba Ji went on distributing the chapattis till everyone

had eaten to the full and even then some chapattis remained.

Baba Ji begins Translating His Satsangs for Dear Ones from South India. Hozur Begins to Prepare Baba Ji for His Future Work

Since Baba Ji was conversant in the languages of dear ones coming to the Dera from Maharastra and other southern regions, Huzur began requesting him to translate His satsangs so they could derive more benefit from His discourses. It was the first visible sign of what Huzur was preparing Baba Ji for in the coming years. Those who were physically near to Hazur were astonished to see how much love and affection He had for Baba Ji even though Baba Ji was by birth a Hindu and had followed the ways and practices of the Nathpanth yogi's which bore little relationship to the traditions of folks brought up in the Sikh faith. But the heart-to-heart Path is something totally apart from such concerns as its source is in the fountainhead of all spiritual practices, the infinite Sea of Love. And as Huzur, with the unbounded grace of His Master had merged His body, mind, and soul in the region of unalloyed peace and bliss and as Baba Ji was a devotee of

that same Light, the inner union of the two grew deeper and deeper with each passing day.

One day, Baba Ji, along with another devoted and loving sevadar, whose name was Bhai Shadi, were sitting together with Huzur. Suddenly Bhai Shadi asked Baba Ji, “When you were following the path of the Nathpanth yogi’s, were you capable of protecting the souls from within?” Before Baba Ji could reply, Huzur interceded saying, “Well if he was not capable of doing it then, what does it matter because now he will protect the souls.”

Baba Ji asks Hazur Several Important Questions

On another occasion, Baba Ji had the opportunity to go and sit with Huzur late in the evening around 9 PM. During the years Baba Ji was at the Dera (1928-1933), even though the numbers of people coming to Him were steadily growing still there were times when those living in the ashram could approach Him informally and in private. Baba Ji enquired from Hazur, “Maharaj Ji, the Path which the Saints prescribe for attaining spiritual realization is that of Simran, Dhyan and Bhajan. Aside from these three inner disciplines is there any other Path by which one can achieve God

realization?" Huzur peacefully closed His eyes for a short while, and then coming out this contemplative mood, He said, "Baba Ji, are you asking about taking refuge with the Guru?" Baba Ji answered, "Yes, Maharaj Ji." Huzur then said, "To truly take complete refuge with the Guru, to become totally dependent on Him is something extremely difficult to do." He elucidated further saying, " For the normal person, even if there is some defects in their meditation practice or even they leave it off for sometime then start again, still in due course of time by falling down and getting up again, by gradual improvement in Simran and Bhajan, they can, with the Grace of the Guru, reach their True Home in Sach Khand. But if one has adopted the path of taking refuge with the Guru i.e., relying totally and completely on Him to take care of all ones inner and outer affairs, if even for one instant ones love for Him breaks or some doubt in His competency arises, then all that one has done in respect to devotion to the Guru is tossed to the wind and one loses all that one has gained. Hence only some very rare soul can succeed on that path. Therefore it is better that one receives His Grace through the meditation practices. In this way they can easily and naturally awaken to their true spiritual heritage. That is the

best way to follow. Still I would like to say that, though extremely difficult, the Path of taking refuge with the Guru is a very high one."

On yet another occasion Baba Ji placed this question before Huzur regarding the final phase of the spiritual journey within: "Maharaj Ji, in Satsang You have made reference to the regions of Alakh (Indescibable), Agam (Inaccessible), Anami (the Nameless) that are components of the realm of the True and Absolute Lord, now kindly reveal more about these regions." Maharaj Ji replied, "You have seen the Guru so whatever He is instructing you to do, you should, with faith, do that. Then the Guru will from within reveal to you every detail of this sublime subject." So Baba Ji did exactly as Huzur had requested and gave his entire attention to meditation and with His Grace went inside and directly experienced those pure inner regions. Regarding this Baba Ji used to say, "I was a very ordinary person yet He bestowed on my soul the great Benediction of Love". This thought remained uppermost in his heart throughout his life and it is why he was constantly singing the praises of his Guru. In later years Baba Ji wrote a hauntingly beautiful bhajan that captured the depth and beauty of the inner

relationship with Hazur that drew his soul deeper and deeper into the sanctuary of Love Divine:

Guru Raayaa Tava Charani

Guru raayaa tava charani

Tana mana vaahile (refrain)

O Majestic Guru, I sacrifice body and mind at Your holy lotus feet.

Janana marana bhava dukha harana

Karuna nidhaana, kritaartha kele (1)

You destroyed the pain of birth and death.
O Treasure House of Grace, You have solved the mystery of existence.

Kota kota dandavata, tujha guru maaule

Thaata hai viraata, ati uncha ghaata

Chakuni vaata, bahu bhramiyale (2)

Millions of time I prostrate myself before You; O Guru, You are the Loving Mother of all.
Your magnificence is awe-inspiring; You dwell in

the sublime regions.
Seeking to scale those heights, many are misled on devious paths.

Japa tapa saadhana, upavaasa saadhile

Vrata nema aachaara, karuni vichaara

Taapa dhuna agni, bahu taapiyale (3)

They practice the repetitions and austerities; they observe the fasts.
Fulfilling their vows and carrying out religious observances, they do deeds of righteousness and cultivate compassion.
Sitting in the heat and smoke, they burn the ritual fire.

Mriga naabhi kasturi, mriga naahi dekhileå

Dagamaga chitta, aagha paapa dwaita

Bhramata phiralo, maayaa mrigajale (4)

The musk is hidden in the deer's navel, but the deer cannot find it.
The mind is unsteady and wavering, stuck fast in sin, misdeeds and duality it wanders about in illusion, like the deer chasing after a mirage.

Ati dina daruna, matihina pahile

Gati naam deuni, sthiti sudhaaruni

Patita jaanuni, paara bhava taarile (5)

I am thoroughly wretched, please take care of this one of low intellect.
Give me the knowledge of Naam and improve my plight.
Be merciful on the fallen one; ferry me across the ocean of this world.

Guru Sawana shisha Soma, raasa eka keele

Paara sparsha lokhanda, kanchana jhaale akhanda

Anda brahmaanda tyaaguni, tava charan bhedile (6)

O Guru Sawan, work Your alchemy on Your disciple Somanath.

Touching this iron with the philosopher's stone, transform it through and through into purest gold.

Going beyond the astral and causal realms, I have become absorbed in Your holy lotus feet.

The Fire in the Lantern Store Room

One of the duties to which Baba Ji was assigned that lay outside the scope of his normal langar responsibilities concerned the lighting of the gas lamps, which were placed at strategic places about the Dera so everyone could have some way to discern where they were going in the desert darkness. Baba Ji, along with another sevador by the name of Eknath Ji, worked together early each evening to efficiently get the lanterns placed in their proper locations. The storeroom that held the canister of oil for the lamps was just below Maharaj Ji's room.

One day Baba Ji and Eknath were preparing the lamps for use during the night at the Dera. They were cleaning the glass lanterns, trimming the wicks etc. In the process of doing their work somehow the vessel containing the oil got knocked over and the oil quickly spread across the floor. Eknath was sitting with his back turned toward the spreading oil and so did not observe what was going on. At that time he was lighting another lamp. In the process of doing so he managed to ignite the oil, that was slowly

spreading around him and within a few moments the flames spread about them in all directions. Both quickly dashed outside and fortunately escaped catching fire themselves but in their consternation called out the alarm that a fire was raging in the compound beneath Huzur's room. There were other vessels of oil in that room and the fear was that they too would ignite posing a danger to all in the vicinity of that building including Huzur's, whose room was located directly above.

Hearing the outcry other sevadors rushed to the scene and began forming a line where vessels of water were passed hand-to-hand to the area where the fire was burning with hopes that they could dowse it and put it out. Suddenly, from behind, a voice filled with profound peace resounded in the atmosphere saying. "Cease all this activity." Everyone turned towards the direction of the voice and beheld Huzur quietly standing there, radiant, calm and beautiful. How He came there none could say, yet He was amongst them. All the sevadors drew back, and in that moment the flames suddenly were quelled. In this mysterious way, Huzur mercifully prevented

utter destruction of the housing compound and likewise protected everyone from harm.

Baba Ji Leaves Dera and Returns to Bombay with Huzur's Blessing to Commence the Satsang Work

Baba Ji lived at the Dera for 4-5 years. His days and nights were filled with serving the langar's needs, attending Satsang and meditation, the spiritual pillars of Sant Mat. It was a rare and precious time and Baba Ji was grateful to have the opportunity to live in close proximity to the One who had bestowed on his heart and soul, the gift of initiation into the Path of the Celestial Sound Current. Huzur was the living embodiment of the Teachings of the Saints and from Him one could behold before their eyes, the fruits of living in harmony with the Power that sustained the Creation, the Music of the Spheres. Yet amidst it all he knew that he could not remain there for all times to come as Huzur had indicated to Him inside and outwardly also that His destiny lay in South India where he would be given the responsibility for spreading the Teaching of Sant Mat amongst those who had never encountered the Path of the Masters before.

Having dunk deeply from the cup of Love manifested through the physical form of Huzur, resulting in his being able to complete the inner ascent, his thoughts were filled with compassion of the many souls he had met in his long and arduous quest for truth, who like him, were searching for truth. And beyond those he had personally encountered he was aware of the longing in the hearts of millions of souls for the union with God but who did not have the technique for focusing their attention at the seat of the soul above and behind the two eyes were the grace could be directly experience. He himself felt that the time had come to return to Bombay and take up some work that would allow him to remain financially independent and then serve those who came in his contact by telling them of the Great Saint of Beas so that they too could derive benefit from Him

As this time for departure came, the thought came into His mind to request Huzur to personally come to Bombay as up to this time He had never done so. He (Hazur had traveled extensively in North India but had never ventured as far south as Bombay.) So he placed the request before Him saying, “Maharaj Ji, if You will shower Your grace

and consent to visit Bombay for a Satsang Program then many thousands of people can benefit from Your Darshan and spiritual instructon." On hearing this heartfelt request from a Gurumukh disciple, Huzur gently smiled and said "What is the Kannada language like, in which you are fluent, for I am aware that people of South India speak a language of which I have no knowledge. I know that you are fluent in Hindi, Punjabi and Marathi but how are the Dravidian languages like?" Baba Ji laughed and replied, "The sound of spoken Kannada can be best understood if you put some rocks in a can an then shake them. The sound coming out of the rocks tumbling over each other is like the sound one hears when listening to and speaking Kannada."

Huzur was pleased with his reply, and said, "Somanath, the body in which your soul dwells is highly suitable for spreading the teaching of Sant Mat in South India for you have both the understanding of the ways of the people of the South and with the Grace of the Masters have perfected the meditation after passing through every lower stage of the journey. Go and commence the work of Satsang." Baba Ji perceiving the enormity of Huzur's command,

asked, “How can this work flourish without Your support?” Huzur then said, “Everything has already been prepared for you in advance to the extent that every leaf of the trees will repeat ‘Radhaswami’ to inspire and instill faith in your heart.” His deep and profound words gave Baba Ji the confidence He needed to commence this work in Huzur’s Name.

Just prior to departure Huzur called Baba Ji to Him and gave His final instructions. He first of all told him that he was to earn his own living by honest hard work and he was not to depend on the financial aid of anyone to earn the money for his own upkeep. Furthermore he was always to keep before him the basic teaching of the Saints concerning subsisting on a pure vegetarian diet, maintaining a pure character in all worldly and spiritual affairs and while attending to all ones responsibilities devote a minimum of 2.5 hours a day to meditation and the more the better. He further instructed him not to in any way be attracted to the external grandeur associated with the ashrams of the Saints but rather be totally absorbed in the real inner essence of the Guru which has nothing to do with physical properties or position in the Sangat.

As Baba Ji had lived a life of strict continence and renunciation prior to meeting Huzur, these simple words uttered by Him penetrated deep into His heart and for the entire span of his life in this world he remained true to the injunctions imparted to him on that memorable day.

Outwardly the time of separation had arrived, but for those who have penetrated into the inner sanctuary of the Third Eye where the soul comes in contact with the Radiant Form of the Satguru and then merges with Him. and then stage by stage ascends through the astral, causal and supra causal planes until all sense of individual existence is vanquished in the Infinite Sea of Love, there can never be any real separation.

While this is true in the highest sense of the word, yet on the outer level there is something that happens between the physical form of the disciple and that of the Guru that cannot be understood by those of us who have not yet reached that highest goal for only such a disciple knows that without having in the company of the physical form of the Master would it have been possible to receive the inspiration and guidance to go within and meet the inner form of the Guru that remains with one

at every stage of the journey. It is just to say that the gratitude and reverence such a disciple has for the manifested form of the Guru is profound.

As a parting gift, Baba Sawan Singh Ji gave Baba Ji 20 Rupees (it is to be remembered that Baba Ji had no worldly possession or money at all), 2 pillows, a small wool rug and a small silk carpet. With these few possessions and the treasure of the Guru's blessings and instructions Baba Ji returned to Bombay to take up the work allotted to Him by Huzur.